



Brownfields '96 National Conference September 20 - 21, 1996

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA's Brownfields Initiative strategies include funding pilot programs and other research efforts, clarifying liability issues, entering into partnerships, conducting outreach activities, developing job training programs, and addressing environmental justice concerns.

BROWNFIELDS '96 NATIONAL CONFERENCE: A NEW FRONTIER

For two days in September 1996, more than 1000 participants from all levels of government, business, finance, and local communities gathered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to share ideas, experiences, and new thinking related to brownfields redevelopment. More than 40 sessions were held on various brownfields topics including financing, business reuse, community involvement, assessment and cleanup technologies, and public-private partnerships. In addition, the latest brownfields services and technologies were on display at the Brownfields '96 Showcase and Exhibition Center.

The conference was jointly sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); the International City/County Management Association (ICMA); the American Bar Association, Section of Natural Resources, Energy, and Environmental Law; the National Religious Partnership for the Environment; and the Mortgage Bankers Association of America. The City of Pittsburgh hosted the event.

NOTABLE SPEAKERS

EPA Assistant Administrator (Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response) Elliott P. Laws outlined the Clinton Administration's continued commitment to brownfields redevelopment. He described the

President's proposal to expand the Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative. He also explained the proposed \$2 billion tax incentive for brownfields redevelopment to promote private sector cleanup.

The keynote speaker was U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Henry Cisneros. The Secretary highlighted the cooperation underway between HUD and EPA to expedite brownfields redevelopment, reduce agency overlap, and develop programs that effectively combine expertise. Secretary Cisneros signed an official Memorandum of Understanding between the EPA and HUD at the conference.

Other keynote speakers included:

- The Honorable Phillip A. Singerman, Assistant Secretary, Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce;
- The Honorable Tom Murphy, Mayor of Pittsburgh;
- The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver II, Mayor of Kansas City, Missouri;
- James T. Price, Chair, Brownfields Task Force, American Bar Association;
- Paul Gorman, Executive Director, National Religious Partnership for the Environment;

- William H. Hansell, Executive Director, International City/County Management Association; and
- Thomas C. Voltaggio, Director, Hazardous Waste Management Division, U.S. EPA, Region 3.

SEMINAR SESSIONS

Conference attendees had the opportunity to attend an array of breakout sessions organized according to five topic areas:

- Brownfields Financing;
- Brownfields Redevelopment;
- Community Involvement;
- Site Assessment and Cleanup Technologies; and
- Brownfields Case Studies.

Sessions within each of these topic areas focused on sharing key information and experiences, listening to recognized experts in the various disciplines, and encouraging networking among the conference participants.

Brownfields Financing

From introductory discussions about financing tools to more brownfields-specific topics, sessions focused on a vast array of brownfields financing mechanisms and issues, including: the various public and private financing options available; roles that foundations and non-profits play in brownfields cleanup and redevelopment; and investment opportunities in brownfields projects. Speakers, who represented banks, lending agencies, EPA, and city governments, also discussed strategies to leverage public financing with private financing; ways to bring business back to the city; the private sector view of cleanup and redevelopment; and how to access private sector capital for brownfields investment. For example, "Lost Property/Found Profits: Making Sense Out of the Investment Equation" featured a discussion of investment opportunities in brownfields redevelopment.

Brownfields Redevelopment

Ten sessions were conducted that addressed a range of legal and cleanup issues that governments, community members, and the private sector face in putting brownfields back to productive use. Speakers

included representatives from the legal community, EPA, State government, and small businesses. Specific subjects discussed included: potential liability for brownfields parties; small business and government experiences in marketing brownfields property; state government and private sector experiences with voluntary cleanup programs; and brownfields reuse for housing, open space, and recreation. Case studies from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), EPA Region 5, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Chicago West Central Municipal Conference highlighted the benefits of coordinated government response in successful brownfields redevelopment. The remaining sessions addressed the selling of brownfields properties, business opportunities at brownfields sites, the pros and cons of demolishing or renovating buildings, successful business reuse experience, and reusing sites with leaking underground storage tanks.

Community Involvement

With community participation crucial to the long-term success of brownfields initiatives, seven sessions were presented that focused on the community perspective as it relates to brownfields redevelopment. Speakers included representatives from community action groups, EPA, environmental groups, and religious organizations. Subjects covered included: the community "vision" of brownfields redevelopment; integrating public health, land use, and planning into brownfields redevelopment; identifying the various stakeholders at a brownfields site; and incorporating community concerns into the daily operations of brownfields programs. In one session, participants were given a vivid description of the challenges community leaders have faced regarding environmental cleanup and brownfields redevelopment at Bay View Hunters Point in San Francisco. Other sessions addressed the development of local, state, federal, and community partnerships, how to utilize local job training programs in brownfields redevelopment, and successful environmental job training programs.

Site Assessment and Cleanup Technologies

Seven sessions were presented that focused on the tools for site assessment and risk management and the cleanup technologies now available to address brownfields contamination. Covering the spectrum

of the scientific and environmental policy/action community, speakers represented local, state, federal, and private-sector organizations. The sessions described technologies and approaches (e.g., GIS, LandView™ II) for discovering potential brownfields sites, exploring site assessment technologies, and federal and state risk assessment methods for assessing contamination threats to human health and the environment. In the session on public concerns about hazardous waste risk assessment, the risks facing West Harlem residents from diesel pollution emitted by bus and truck traffic were discussed. The remaining sessions covered risk-based corrective action as a method for determining cleanup levels for hazardous waste, off-the-shelf remedies and innovative technologies for brownfields redevelopment, and future land use decisions.

Brownfields Case Studies

The Brownfields '96 National Conference provided a unique opportunity to showcase a range of brownfields case studies, particularly the tools and procedures that have made brownfields projects successful. The sessions covered the key lessons learned as a result of brownfields redevelopment pilots, the issues associated with using brownfields sites for housing, and the City of Pittsburgh's experience. The Pittsburgh session brought together representatives from the city government, the Department of Environmental Protection, a local bank, Carnegie Mellon University, and a private developer—all critical players that have helped leverage \$25 million of public investment in brownfields into \$96 million of private investment. Remaining sessions addressed the issues facing brownfields redevelopment along transportation corridors, institutional frameworks that facilitate or impede brownfields redevelopment,

brownfields redevelopment in waterfront areas, grouping parcels of land to attract brownfields investment, lessons learned from military base closure and reuse, brownfields opportunities at small sites, and the Benton Harbor, Michigan brownfields redevelopment effort.

WORKING PARTNERSHIPS

Information sharing forums, such as the Brownfields '96 National Conference, are helping achieve coordinated brownfields redevelopment by allowing all of the brownfields players to gather around "one table" and openly share their experiences and ideas. The Brownfields '96 National Conference emphasized that successful brownfields redevelopment relies on collaboration and continuous communication between all parties involved. Brownfields is a true partnership between government, the private sector, and the community, and requires innovative thinking and community acceptance among them all.

1997 CONFERENCE PLANNED

EPA will hold another brownfields conference September 3-5 in Kansas City, Missouri.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Brownfields Initiative, please call the RCRA/Superfund Hotline at:
(800) 424-9346.

Alternatively, please use the Internet World Wide Web to access the EPA Brownfields Home Page at
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>